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- Reviews Philosophy

Film Review

By Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

Crash

Directed by Paul Haggis

Lion's Gate Films 05/05 DVD/VHS Feature Film

R - language, sexual content, some violence

In [The Cheating Culture](#), David Callahan writes, "As income differences among Americans have grown larger in recent decades, so have social differences. The enduring correlation between ethnicity and income aggravates the problem, piling ethnic and cultural differences on top of class differences. Looking at each other across the chasms of class and race, many Americans see little reason to believe that they share each other's values – and little reason to trust each other." The end result of this is a divided society where the poisonous effects of intolerance and hatred manifest in everyday interactions between people. Very few filmmakers have dealt with this phenomenon and quite a few movies have even reinforced this lack of trust with their racist characters and coddling of the so-called "Winning Class."

Three cheers for writer Paul Haggis, who adapted the script for *Million Dollar Baby* and is making his feature film directorial debut with *Crash*. Over the years, this Emmy-winning writer for such series as *thirtysomething*, *L.A. Law*, and *EZ Streets* has finely tuned his craft as evidenced in this morally rich, nuanced, and poignant drama set in Los Angeles where he has lived for more than 25 years. "My aim with this film," Haggis has written, "is to explore how intolerance is a collective problem. I did not set out to offend or ignite controversy, but to look at many different people, each with his or her unique perspective. Film enables us to walk, however briefly, in the shoes of strangers. In that sense, I hope that *Crash* succeeds not so much in pointing out differences, but in recognizing our shared humanity." We would add that the film is also about the incivility and conflict that result from living in a

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